

# Foreign firms to expand operations in S'wak

KUCHING, Mon.-At least one foreign electronics component manufacturing company is expected to start operation in Sama Jaya Industrial Estate within the next two months, Minister of Industrial Development, Datuk Abang Abdul Rahman Johari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg told to newsmen after he presented Certificates of Manufacturing to 22 graduates at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) this morning.

"Another one is in the processing of starting up and there are more who have expressed interest in setting operations in Sarawak," Johari said.

He declined to reveal the amount of investments brought in except that it is small to the big company, but a huge amount for Sarawak.

The two companies which have confirmed their coming are from Japan and the United States.

He said one of the foreign companies has already identified a factory being developed by Malaysia Industrial Estate (Miel) Sdn Bhd for its operations.

"One of these electronic firms will require at least 60 skilled manpower to start off as they are already in the process of installing their machines," Johari said.

Meanwhile, Vice Chancellor of Unimas, Professor Datuk Zawawi Ismail said despite the economic downturn, the people have gained much from the experience which has exposed the structural weaknesses which had made us less competitive in the speculation market.

"One of the weaknesses is the lack of skilled manpower and UNIMAS and Komag USA has initiated the co-operation to address this shortage by improving the human resource development so as to attract investments to Sarawak," Prof. Zawawi said.

Komag USA's Administrative Director, Mr. Kevin Tompkins, who also spoke at the function, said, "The co-operation has given a strong example to those in USA as to what can be



Johari (centre) handing over a certificate to one of the graduates yesterday while Prof Zawawi (left), Tompkins (right) and the Dean of the Engineering Faculty Dr. Mohamad Kadim Suaidi (partially hidden) look on.

achieved when two entities put their heads together."

"Komag has also started a Komag Trust Fund which will be opened to other companies to join in and the Fund will be utilised to provide training and education for the people of Sarawak."

On the course, he said, "The Certificate of Manufacturing course is one of the long term steps undertaken to meet the skilled manpower shortage which Sarawak is facing."

"We can benefit from the economic slow

down as we can identify our weaknesses and take steps to make us stronger for the new millennium. There is an expected increase in the electronic components market and we have the infrastructure in place to take advantage of it," Johari added.

"Human resource development for the people should be geared towards the changes and the people should be flexible enough to adapt to the change in the market conditions," Johari said.